

December 13, 2006

Ex Parte

Ms. Marilyn Dortch, Secretary

Federal Communications Commission

445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, DC 20554

Re: Implementation of Section 621(a)(1) of the Cable Communications Policy Act of 1984 as amended by the Cable Television Consumer Protection and Competition Act of 1992, MB Docket No. 05-311

Dear Ms. Dortch,

This notice is to record my ex parte meeting with Demetrius via phone of Commissioner Martin's office, in which I was directed to fax my comments about 05-311. My comments are summarized as follows:

We unite with Access Montgomery and the Alliance for Community Media members in calling for competition without destruction of local, community controlled media.

1) The proposed rule eliminates incentive for providers to negotiate in good faith. If the city and the provider do not come to agreement within 90 days, the provider can proceed without an agreement and likely result in our communities not receiving the benefit of these public interest provisions. They can then make billions of dollars using our public land without considering local needs. This framework would be unreasonable.

2) The proposed rule lacks a remedy for geographic discrimination. Public, Education and Government Access, or PEG, are tools to engage our local communities in democracy. Democratic participation should be for all, not based on a company business plan. The public-right-of-way is owned by all in our community, not just those in an area lucky enough to be served. We believe that inevitable market imbalances must be anticipated by the FCC, as they were by Congress, and that any rule-making must provide these three elements:

A) A standard for identifying imbalances in service.

B) A party responsible for identifying the imbalance—logically, the municipality.

C) A means for prevention or remedy of the imbalance.

3) The proposed rule reduces the support for PEG or other community media services from what is allowed by current Federal law. We believe this is an arbitrary reduction which will hurt our communities. This reduction would eliminate a valued community resource with no demonstrated effect on either subscriber price or level of competition.

4) Any subsequent or further proposed rulemaking that would provide competitive video service providers with an exemption from having to provide PEG Access would be unacceptable. Elimination of the requirement for PEG Access would reduce diversity and localism.

5) The changes being proposed to the law are dramatic. We believe that such changes to the law should be made by Congress, not the FCC. These changes will slow competition by confusing the legal framework. Such changes should be decided by law-makers, not the courts. The FCC should not usurp Congressional authority.

We look forward to working with the FCC to establish a process which supports both competition and community fairness. Please contact us if you have questions or comments.

Sincerely,

Patricia Stewart
Research, Evaluation and Development Director/MCT
7548 Standish Place
Rockville, MD 20855
pstewart@mct-tv.org

CC:
Christina Pauze
Chris Robbins
Heather Dixon
Rudy Brioche
Bruce Gottlieb
My Congressional Delegation